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Trend employment growth in Australia continues to ease

Trend employment growth in Australia continued to ease from the relatively strong growth seen in late 2015, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

Over the past month, trend employment increased by 4,100 persons to 11,910,800 persons - a monthly growth rate of 0.03 per cent. This monthly growth rate was below the monthly average over the past 20 years (0.15 per cent), and down further from the recent peak of 0.26 per cent in October 2015.

"The trend in part-time employment growth continued from March into April, with the 10,500 increase in part-time employment being the eleventh consecutive monthly increase of more than 10,000 persons. In contrast, trend full-time employment decreased by 6,400 persons, its third consecutive monthly decrease," General Manager of ABS' Macroeconomic Statistics Division, Bruce Hockman said.

This is reflected in the trend monthly hours worked in all jobs series, which decreased by 5.6 million hours (0.3 per cent) to 1,628.9 million hours. This was the fourth consecutive decrease in hours worked in all jobs, which reflects a combined decrease of 16.2 million hours (1.0%) from the high point at December 2015.

In considering growth over the last year, trend employment increased by around 228,900 persons (an annual growth rate of 2.0 per cent). This is down from the annual employment growth of 295,000 persons (2.6 per cent) at December 2015.

The trend unemployment rate decreased slightly, down to 5.7 per cent. The participation rate also decreased slightly, though it remained at 64.9 per cent in rounded terms.

"The trend series smoothes the more volatile seasonally adjusted estimates and provide the best measure of the underlying behaviour of the labour market," Mr Hockman said.

The seasonally adjusted number of persons employed increased by 10,800 in April 2016. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2016 remained unchanged at 5.7 per cent and the seasonally adjusted labour force participation rate decreased by less than 0.1 percentage points to 64.8 per cent.

More details are in the April 2016 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0), as well as the upcoming April 2016 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001) due for release on May 26. These publications are available for free download (after release) from the ABS website: https://www.abs.gov.au

Media note:

- When reporting ABS data you must attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the

ABS) as the source.
- Media requests and interviews - contact the ABS Communications Section on 1300 175 070 (8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri).
- The ABS produces trend estimates to provide a more reliable indicator of the underlying behaviour of the Labour Force series. Trend estimates were introduced into the Labour Force series in the mid 1980s and are available back to February 1978. Trend estimates are considered the best indicators of the underlying behaviour in the labour market. See paragraphs 28 to 37 of the Explanatory Notes in Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0).
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